

Honorary Degree Dinner

Welcome to the University of Michigan

Spring Commencements are always exciting,

...the excitement of graduates
...the relief of faculty in finishing
the academic year
but this one is something quite special...

For one thing, spring has finally arrived

in the frozen midwest...
...after a very long winter

For another, we have a

“presidential” commencement
...or at least a “first lady” commencement

This is also a very special commencement

for both Anne and me...
...for we will have our VERY FIRST UM graduate
...actually twice...
...since tonight our daughter will receive her MPH
...and then in a few weeks her MD!

But it is also special for us for another reason,

because tomorrow we will honor some very
special people.

First, let me introduce Donald Hall

...prize winning poet, dramatist, and critic
...and former UM faculty member...
who left behind some remarkable legacies
...the Michigan Society of Fellows
...ourstanding courses in creative writing and literature
Welcome back.

Next, Norman Ramsey

...Higgins Professor of Physics from Harvard
...Nobel Laureate
and a couple of persona ties
...my PhD “grandfather”
...and my daughter Kathy’s first physics professor!

The Countess Albina Boisrouvray

...international journalist, film producer
...and humanitarian
with impact on peoples throughout the world
I also have a personal tie with Albina...
...since her son, Francious-Xaivier Bagnoud
graduated from our aerospace engineering department
during my days as dean of engineering.
Although Francious was killed in a tragic accident
after his graduation, his memory lives on at Michigan,
both through his own achievements and the
remarkable generosity of his mother in
building the FXB building and the FXB prize.
It will mean a great deal to all of us to award you, Albina,
with an honorary degree from your son’s alma mater.

And, of course, Margaret Dow Towsley,

...educator
...civic leader
...humanitarian
and #1 tuardian angel of the University of Michigan
Margaret and Harry Towsley have probably had more impact
on UM over the years than anyone else I can think of
...through their generosity
...through their ability to take young deans under their wings
But there is another side of Margaret Towsley I have to tell you about
...she is the greatest Michigan football fan in history

...present at every game
I always drop by to chat with her...
...she calms me down
The great moment...Rose Bowl-93
...last quarter...she was COOL!

A very special Commencement

After dinner, John D'Arms will take over

(Anne and I are rushing over to participate in our
first-ever parent's commencement.)